

The Catchmark

Newsletter of the Clare County Historical Society

Volume 13 Number 3

Sharing Our Past With the Present.

Fall 2014

Join Us For Old Fashion Day



It all happens Saturday, Sept. 27, from 11 a.m.— 4 p.m. at the Clare County Museum Complex. Admission remains \$2/person or \$5/family. There will be plenty of activities for kids and adults on this last weekend of the year. See the article on page 3 for details.

Clare County Historical Society

Our mission is to preserve, advance, and disseminate the history of Clare County.

The Society oversees a complex located at the corner of Dover and Eberhart Roads northeast of Clare, which includes the Dover one-room schoolhouse, Ott Family Log Cabin and a Museum.

The complex is open Saturdays from 1 –4 p.m. through September. We also have photos, books, old newspapers and documents in our archives. Access to these is by appointment. Learn more at clare-countyhistory.org or visit us on Facebook.

Growth, Changes Mark 2014 Museum Season



We added to our museum complex this year with (photos clockwise starting at the top) a new blacksmith shop. We've also added a bit of paint on some hard-to-reach-spots (like the school-house bell tower and flagpole) and installed our new block quilt that is part of the county's new block quilt tour. The design is called "Stars of Stripe" and is based on a quilt created by our own Ruth Owens last year. The Museum complex is open Saturdays through September.



New Logo, Updated Look

Thanks to the generosity of Herb Byers, a graphic artist in Ohio with ties to Clare County, our organization has a whole new look on our website, Facebook page, our newsletter masthead and axe head logo and more including colors, font and more (the ad on page 3 was also his creation).

It all began earlier this year when Herb asked if he could give us a hand with our graphics.

We agreed thinking he'd only give us a few items. Instead we were blown away when Herb created an entire portfolio of ideas for us, covering everything from a new logo to ideas for shirts, hats, updates to our website, Facebook page and more..

Herb has long worked in the graphics and museum interpre-

See Logo, page 2

Rumor Has It...

Jon Ringelberg, one of our board members and a former judge has heard a lot of rumors over the years both on the bench and in his research of local history. Jon has learned many facts. However, he says he's also learned that the facts of history can easily become twisted into 'urban (or is it rural?) legends.'

Here are a few rumors Jon has heard over the years. Although they are interesting, all are completely and totally false and should not be repeated as fact, he adds.

1. There is a tunnel from Wildwood (the house at the

northwest corner from the Tobacco River bridge) to the Doherty Hotel.

2. The Purple Gang hung out at Harry Bennett's Lodge at Lost Lake in Freeman Township.
3. There is a tunnel from Wildwood to a house located to the east going under North McEwan street.
4. The ladder behind the Plexiglas in Cops & Doughnuts provided an escape for the Purple Gang.
5. The McKay airport at Loon Lake (Grant/Hatton Townships) was built after WWII

as a back-up Air Force landing strip should Oscoda and Willow Run be destroyed.

6. A house in Farwell has a secret hiding place used as an Underground Railroad stop for slaves escaping to Canada.
7. Jig's Inn located on the west side of 8 Point Lake in Garfield Township served as a house of ill-repute.

Now if you have evidence any of the above are true or have your own rumor to add or would like to know if something history related is true or false, send Jon an email at museum@clarecountyhhistory.org.

Have a Cigar

In early August, CCHS board member Jon Ringelberg ran across a hammerhead from the logging era that had been used for creating logs marks. Log marks (also called Catchmarks) were hammered in the ends of logs so they could be identified during spring drives much like brands are still used to identify cattle.

Most log marks were symbols

or letters, but this hammerhead said "CIGAR" and Jon's research showed it identified logs belonging to the Tobacco River Lumber Company.

Some of the company's other log marks were PLUG, SNUFF, TOBACO, and SMOKE.

The museum also has the ends of two old logs with log marks in them. One reads "TAT" and shows that the log

once belonged to a Saginaw lumber company. A second log has a "-X-" and is from a Newaygo lumber company log.

The latter log was obtained this summer thanks to two CCHS members who purchased the log this spring.

An exhibit is being developed to display all these logging items.

Logo, from page 1

tation business. His resume describes him as a photographer, designer, illustrator, creative services contractor, for commercial, industrial and interpretive accounts. That latter term means he has a wealth of experience creating displays for museums and helping create

their branding (think logos and a consistent look). Herb is also an avid fisherman as the photo of him to the right with the bass attests.

We owe Herb a big debt of gratitude—like we owe all our volunteers who made this year and this museum possible. That means those on our CCHS

board; those who staff the museum on Saturdays; those who write articles; conduct research; make donations; and more. We could not do it without you. Thanks!



Enjoy Old Fashion Day, Sept. 27

The Clare County Historical Society invites you to come on out and join in its annual Old Fashion Day featuring The Sunshine String Band on Saturday, Sept 27 at the Clare County Museum complex at the corner of Eberhart and Dover Road.

This year, you will have the opportunity to see our

news blacksmith shop and see blacksmiths in action, We also have historical displays, free wagon rides, live music, animals, a chance to ring the old school bell and more. Food and refreshments will be available

CLARE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
PRESENTS

OLD FASHION DAY





THE SUNSHINE STRING BAND

Old Tractors, Hayrides,
Good Food, Blacksmiths
Animals and Much More!

**SATURDAY
SEPTEMBER 27, 2014**
11:00 AM - 4:00 PM
Eberhart & Dover Road
Enjoy our last weekend of the season!

CCHS 

*Sharing our past
with the present.*

Clare, MI

for purchase.

Old Fashion Day is meant to people a fun way to experience what life was like 75—100 years ago (except that we do offer indoor plumbing and running water).

So get the kids away from the video games, put the weekend chores on hold, and c'mon out to the Clare County Museum complex. Call Carron at (989) 386-9506 with questions.

and Enjoy *The Sunshine String Band*

Kim and Dave Maul of Hope, Michigan with son Robert and good friend Kelly Beck, perform as "The Sunshine String Band." This year, the band will again bring their toe-tapping, hand-clapping music to the front porch of our museum during Old Fashion Day on Sept. 27.

Kim plays the guitar, harmon-

ica and sings lead and harmony vocals. Dave plays the stand up bass and does backup vocals. Robert plays the 5-string banjo and sings lead and harmony vocals. Kelly plays the guitar, mandolin, does percussion, and sings lead and harmony and vocals.

The band plays at festivals,

street strolls, and other events. Sometimes our own George Dunham gets onstage to join them in a song or two at our event. And yes, George is a good singer!

In any event, bring a chair or use one of ours and enjoy some great entertainment.

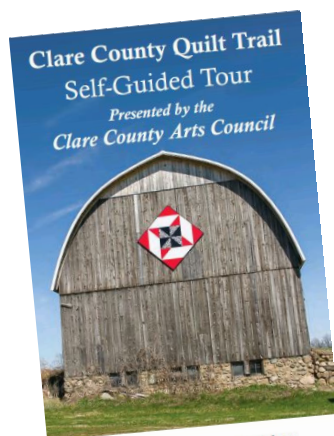
Take to the Trails

Clare county is lovely no matter what time of year, but fall is one of the best times (with winter, spring and summer being the others)! There is plenty to do from bike rides, to shopping to dining and more.

For the second year, CCHS and the Farwell Museum are offering two loop tours combining scenery with history. Joining these tours for 2014, a new block quilt tour is being offered by the Clare County Arts Council. This later tour offers an opportunity to travel the county and see quilt blocks atop various farms, homes and businesses, and learn a bit about the symbolism behind each.

Quilt Block Trail

The Clare County Quilt Trail promotes the natural beauty of rural Clare County, linking together artists, small business, farm and the local community.



We hope you will enjoy the Tapestry we have woven across Clare County!



Friends of the Quilt Trail:
Clare Rotary Club
Clare County Visitor & Convention Bureau
Clare Kiwanis

The trail was began in December 2013 by the Clare County Arts Council with five block quilts. There are now more than 25 and the idea is still growing.

The trail is part of a growing national movement. Originally quilt blocks were painted quilt squares-usually fashioned on boards and then mounted on a barn or other build-

ing. Now many are made of weather resistant materials. According to Wikipedia, the idea of a Block Quilt Trail began in 2001 in Adams County, Ohio and has spread rapidly across the country. There are now trails in 49 states including eight Michigan counties, including Missaukee, Osceola and Grand Traverse. Across the border in Canada, British Columbia and Ontario both have developed trails.

Download a brochure at clarecountyartscouncil.info or go to quiltblocktrailinfo.com to learn more about this growing program.

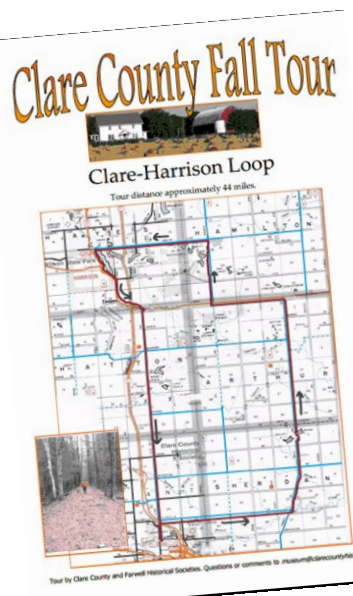
Fall Color Tours

Fall is a great time for leaf peepers to visit Clare County and we have some great drives with some awesome color. To make it easier for visitors and residents to see our local color and learn a bit about our local history, our historical society along with the Farwell Area historical society again offers two fall color tours.

One tour covers the Farwell-Lake George region and the other covers the Clare-Harrison region.

Both are loops that can be driven in an hour or so. The back of each tour contains a short description of items of cultural or historical interest—or items along the route that provide just plain fun stuff.

Copies of the two fliers will be available at the museum and at local Chamber of Commerce offices (we hope). The fliers can also be downloaded clarecounty-history.org.



Clare Depot at New Location



The Clare Railroad Depot, with its distinctive turret and Queen Anne architecture, has been an important part of this mid-Michigan community for more than 120 years. From 1895 until its closing in the 1950s, untold thousands--lumberjacks, farmers, businessmen, families, soldiers and tourists--passed through its doors.

Now plans are underway for the depot to again serve the community, this time as a welcoming center, meeting place, railroad museum, local rail-trail hub and home to the Clare Area Chamber of Commerce and Clare County Arts Council.

This past April the depot was moved to its new permanent

location on Fourth Street across from Clare Castle Senior Center and closer to the downtown area. CCHS with the assistance of a number of individual donations from members, purchased for one of the more than 30 windows in the depot.

Once the renovation is complete a small plaque will note our donation. In the meantime, stop by the depot during daylight hours to see what work has been done and to get an idea of how much work remains.

Hint: A lot, including an elevator.

Your help is needed. Go to claredepot.com to learn more or call Diane Lyon at (989) 386-7541 ext. 106.



Signs of a Railroad? Or Maybe Railroad Signs?

Is there any impressive remnants of an old railroad that you are aware of in the county? Perhaps just some logs that were once a trestle? Or perhaps an old earthen dam that once held water to supply locomotives that once plied the railroad grades?

Or perhaps you have some-

thing related to the old Clare depot, a ticket or photo or perhaps a timetable.

If you have something that you think is of interest that you'd like to tell us about, show us or perhaps donate, we'd love to know. Contact us at museum@clarecountyhistory.org or call Marty at (734) 755-2638.

All Aboard for Meredith and Leota

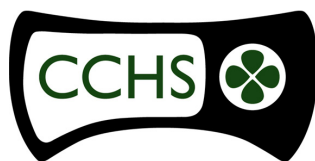


A short paved trail through the woods north of Hayes Township Hall in Harrison leads to a scenic overlook with a small pond approximately 30 feet below it. Not far beyond the overlook the trail ends abruptly, although visitors may see signs that the trail once curved both right and left.

What visitors may not realize is that they are standing on the remains of an old railroad embankment, part of a railroad grade built more than 130 years ago by men equipped with little more than shovels and picks.

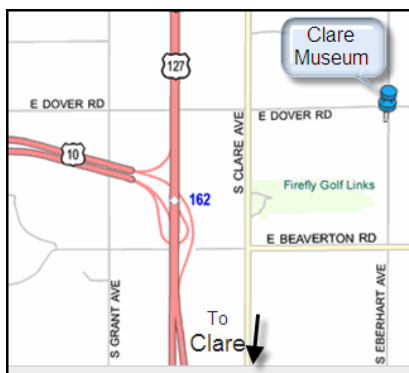
Building the embankment across the valley and the railroad bed to the towns of Meredith (14.9 miles) and then Leota (8.8 miles) once the must have been back-braking work. And temporary: Trains stopped running to the former town by 1893 and the latter in the early 20th century.

Now a plaque affixed to the overlook paid for by CCHS salutes the nameless workers and their accomplishments, and promotes our local history.



CLARE COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

c/o Jon H. Ringelberg, Treasurer
3062 E Colonville Rd
Clare, Michigan 48617-9448



Our museum complex is at 3050
Eberhart Rd. at Dover, five miles north
of Clare.

Like us on Facebook!



Questions, comments? Email
museum@clarecountyhistory.org

Join the Clare County Historical Society!

Membership in the Clare
County Historical Society
is only \$10 per calendar year.
Join this fall and your member-
ships will be valid through
December 2015.

Your support makes it
possible for us to run our
museum complex, publish our
newsletters, host our website
and run events and promote
Clare County history within our

county and around the region,
tell its stories and protect its
artifacts.

We'd love to have you join us
and play an active role in learning
about our past—and sharing it!

Name: _____

☐

New

☐

Renewal

Address: _____

Address 2: _____

City: _____

State: _____

Zip: _____

\$_____ Total enclosed*

** Donations in excess of \$10 are greatly appreciated
and will be used to improve our museum complex
and promote local history.*

Make checks payable to: Clare County Historical Society
and mail them to
CCHS, c/o Jon H. Ringelberg, Treasurer
3062 E Colonville Rd
Clare, Michigan 48617-9448